

# Budget/Municipal Aid

There are strong indications that Connecticut's economy is beginning to turn the corner, and for the first time in three years the state experienced a budget surplus rather than a deficit. This enabled the legislature to restore funding for programs and municipalities that were reduced over the last few years. The adjusted state budget reinstates the \$500 maximum property tax credit against the personal income tax; this is up from \$350. In addition, the legislature restored the popular "sales tax free week" that was scheduled to be eliminated this year. All clothing and footwear costing under \$300 sold during the third week of August will continue to be free of sales tax. The legislature also did away with the annoying 6% sales tax on newspapers.

On the funding side, the budget appropriates additional money for new state troopers, the Department of Mental Retardation's wait list, and prisoner recidivism programs. It also authorizes \$88.2 million in new aid to cities and towns. All towns in the 35th District will receive more funding than what was authorized under the original biennial budget.

## ★ STATE GRANTS TO MUNICIPALITIES IN THE 35TH DISTRICT ★

	FY 04	FY 05 Revised
★ Ashford	\$3,551,302	\$3,608,485
★ Chaplin	\$1,949,640	\$1,992,877
★ Coventry	\$7,889,173	\$8,084,143
★ Eastford	\$1,020,785	\$1,078,616
★ Ellington	\$8,303,453	\$8,395,186
★ Hampton	\$1,325,237	\$1,390,562
★ Pomfret	\$2,777,643	\$2,844,477
★ Stafford	\$9,179,757	\$9,533,334
★ Tolland	\$8,992,453	\$9,142,716
★ Union	\$345,807	\$364,463
★ Vernon	\$16,272,913	\$16,892,702
★ Willington	\$3,335,595	\$3,494,467
★ Woodstock	\$4,710,683	\$4,810,115



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State Senator

Tony Guglielmo

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Vernon, Willington & Woodstock

# State Senator Tony Guglielmo



Dear Neighbor,

At the start of the 2004 Session of the Connecticut General Assembly there were many questions regarding the legislature's ability to complete its business on time.

Since 2004 was the short session, the legislature had only three full months to address issues concerning our seniors, the environment, aid to towns and the state budget. In addition, the controversy surrounding Governor Rowland threatened to take attention away from the issues and onto the possibility of impeachment.

Fortunately, the legislature worked in a bipartisan effort to complete business in a timely manner. The main responsibility of the legislature in the second year of the biennium is to make adjustments to the state budget. The good news this year is that Connecticut's economy is rebounding, and for the first time in three years the state is experiencing a surplus rather than a deficit.

This report details some of the important issues that were addressed in the 2004 legislative session. Should you have any questions regarding these issues or any other matter concerning state government, please feel free to contact my office at 1-800-842-1421, email me at [Anthony.Guglielmo@po.state.ct.us](mailto:Anthony.Guglielmo@po.state.ct.us) or write me at: Senator Tony Guglielmo, Legislative Office Building, Room 3400, Hartford, CT 06106.

Thank you for taking the time to read my 2004 End of Session Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tony Guglielmo".

Tony Guglielmo

## Clean Cars

A measure that requires the state of Connecticut to implement the California Low Emission Vehicle Program overwhelmingly passed the General Assembly this year. Under the new law, Connecticut joins neighboring states Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Vermont and Maine that have already adopted the California standard which goes well beyond the current minimum federal standard. The new law requires all new cars and light trucks sold in Connecticut to meet the new emission standard beginning with the 2008 model year vehicle. In addition, the law requires that up to 10% of cars sold in Connecticut must be Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEVs) or partial ZEVs.

Adopting the new standards will not create a burden on automobile manufacturers because these cars are already being built. Estimates indicate that by implementing the new standards over 130 tons of toxins and pollutants will be removed from the air. That is important in a state where over 10% of our children have asthma.

## Seniors

This year the legislature created a law to allow those enrolled in ConnPACE to participate in the first stage of the new federal Medicare Prescription Drug Program and it comes without additional costs or risk of lost benefits for Connecticut residents. The new law offers drug discount cards that come with a \$600 annual subsidy to Medicare beneficiaries. The law ensures that no Connecticut citizen enrolled in ConnPACE will pay any more than the standard \$16.25 co-pay for prescription drugs. In addition, ConnPACE participants can get replacements for lost or stolen prescription drugs. While the bill limits the replacements to twice a year, the prescriptions are exempt from the program's \$16.25 co-pay. Another law requires the



Department of Social Services to look into the feasibility of ConnPACE participants acquiring some of their prescription drugs from Canada. The goal is to make sure Connecticut residents are getting access to affordable prescription drugs.



## Veterans

There is perhaps no better time to enact legislation that honors our veterans than at a time of war. This year the General Assembly increased the number of veterans eligible for admission to the state Veterans' Home and burial in the state veterans' cemetery. The new law eliminates war service as criteria for admission or burial. Now any veteran honorably discharged from active service in the United States Armed Forces is eligible. Many veterans in our state need assistance. The new law honors their service and provides them with additional help they may need.

## Prison Overcrowding

The 35th Senatorial District is home to many of the hard working men and women who work to keep our correctional facilities operating in a safe and efficient manner. That is why it is so important that when dealing with concerns of prison overcrowding, we also take into full consideration what is best for those who have the difficult job of maintaining our correctional facilities.

Currently, Connecticut prisons are at or above capacity. This year the General Assembly passed legislation in an effort to reduce prison overcrowding. The new act makes various changes to the administration of the Department of Correction. It also modifies prisoner sentencing and parole in the hope of opening new beds that will eventually save money. It does this by transferring non-violent prisoners from prison to halfway houses or group homes. In an attempt to stem the flow of technical parole violators being sent back to prison, the act requires the Board of Parole to create a system of incremental sanctioning. Our prisons are filled with technical violators. Incremental sanctioning will give parole officers additional choices, rather than just sending technical violators back into the prison system.